



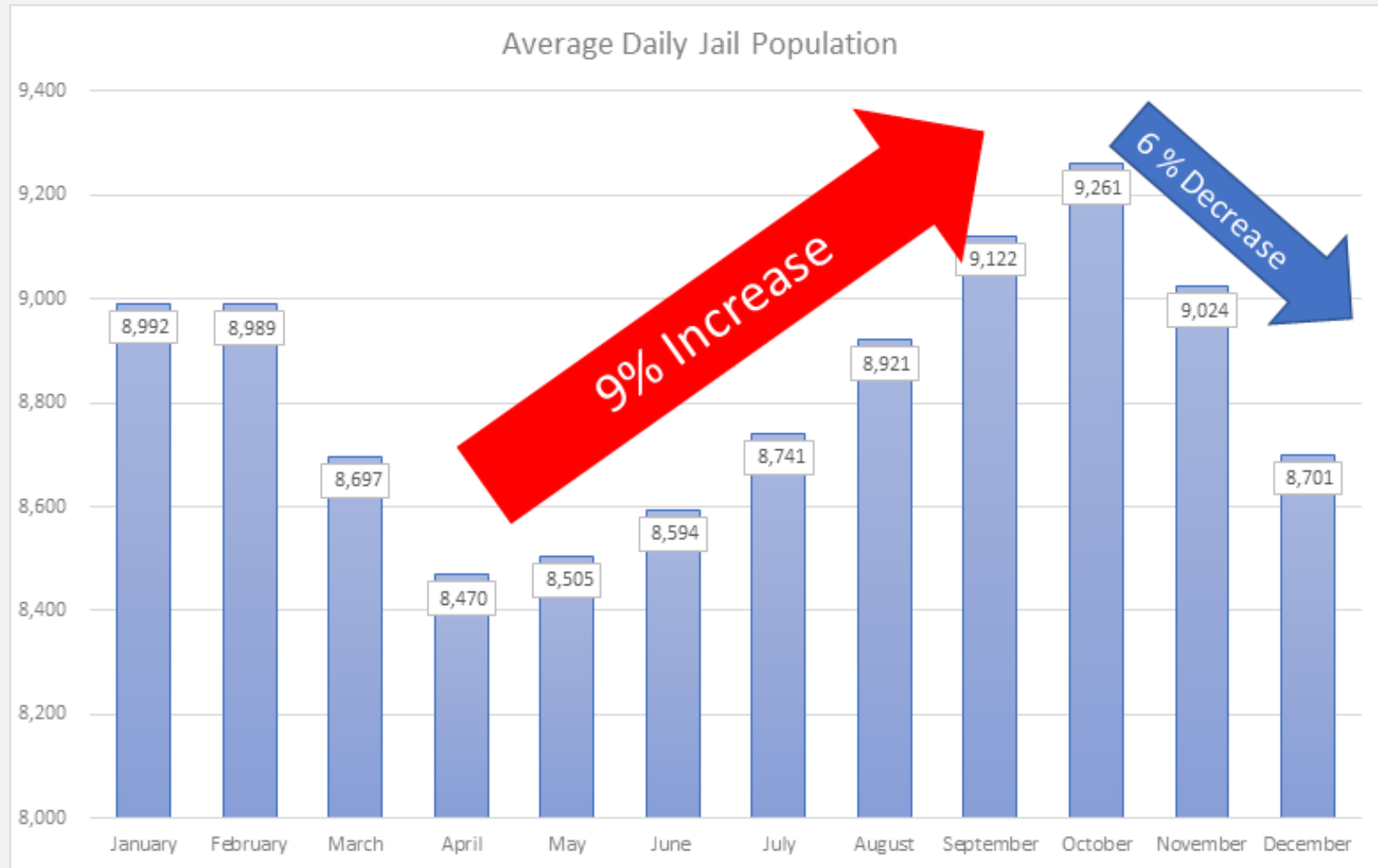
# Quarterly Meeting

January 27, 2022

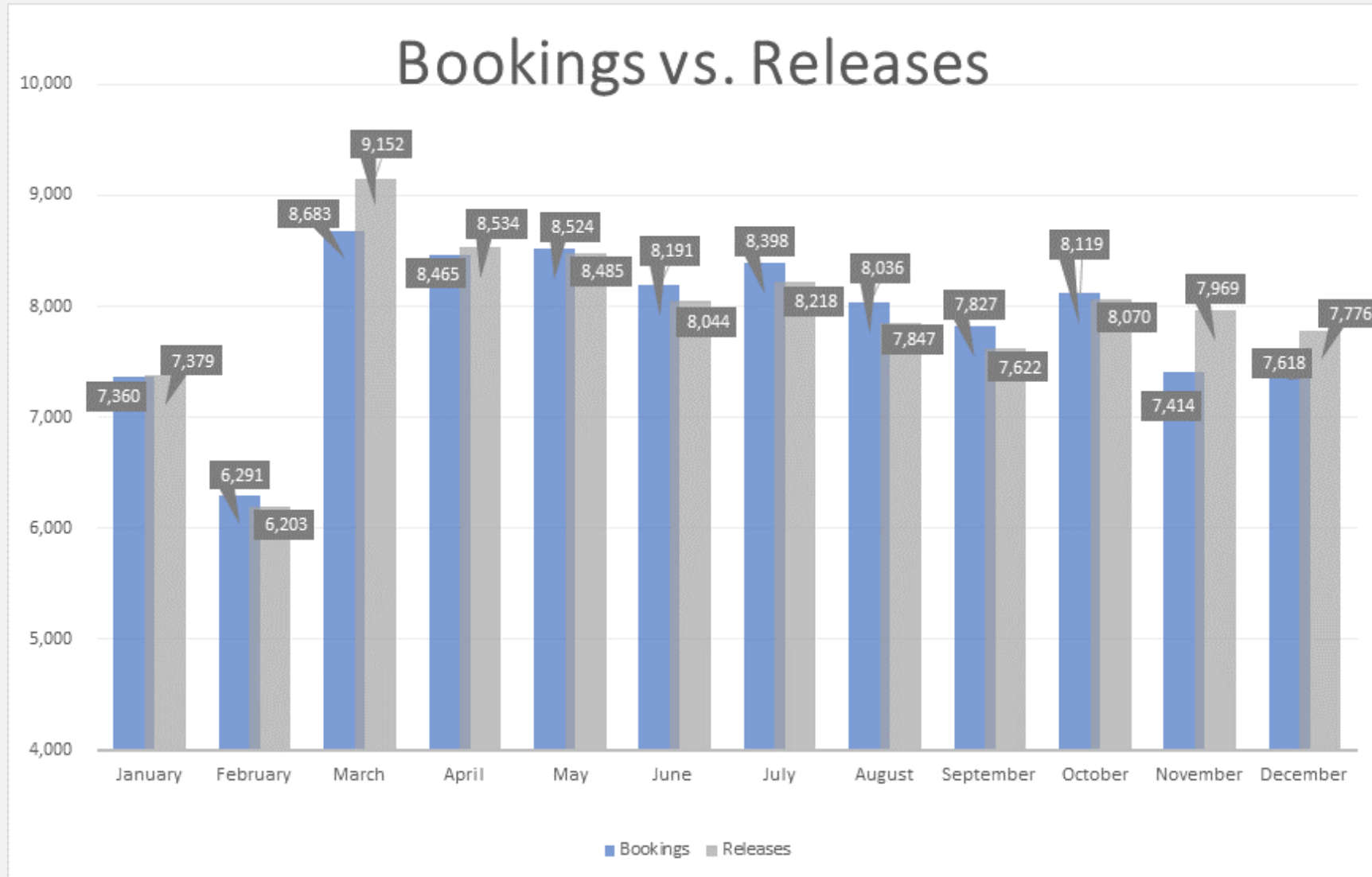
# AGENDA

- Call to Order by Chair Commissioner Ellis
- Welcome to new members
- Approval of previous Meeting Minutes 05.20.21
- Discussion regarding CJCC strategic Planning & Approach to Committees
- Discussion regarding Jail Population
- Discussion regarding Criminal Case Backlog
- Adjournment

# 2021 Jail Population Trends



# 2021 Jail Population Trends cont'd



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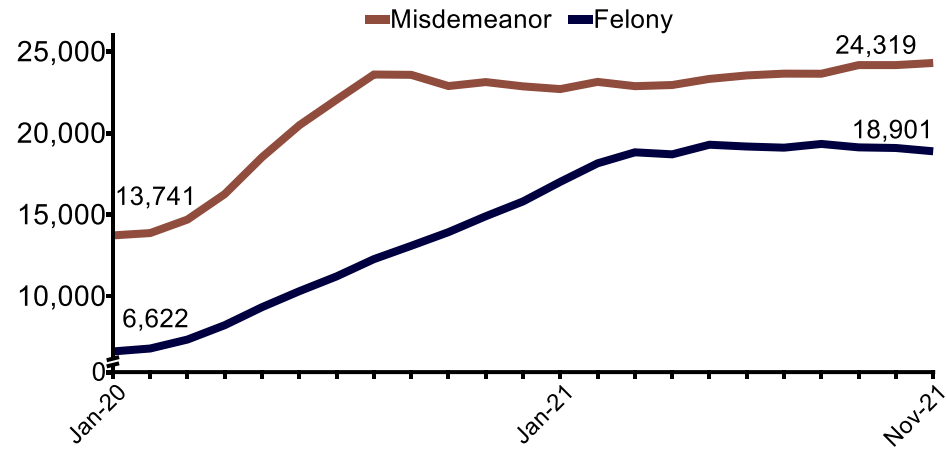
# Criminal Case Backlog update

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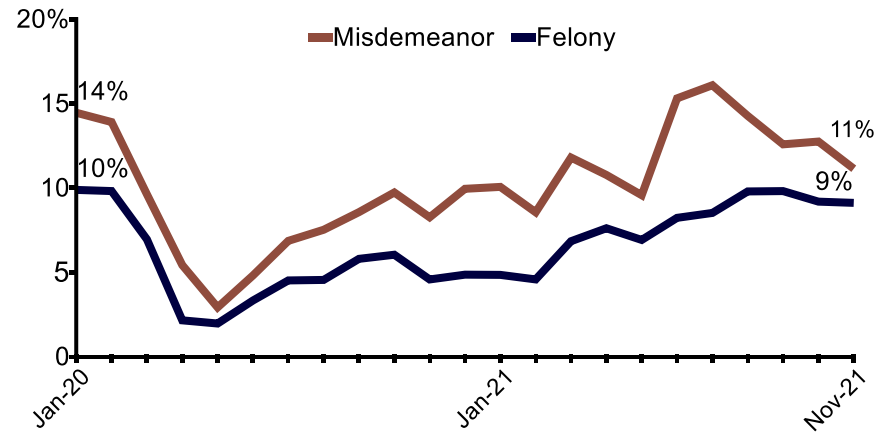
12/14/2021

# Criminal Courts: Backlog progress using key indicators

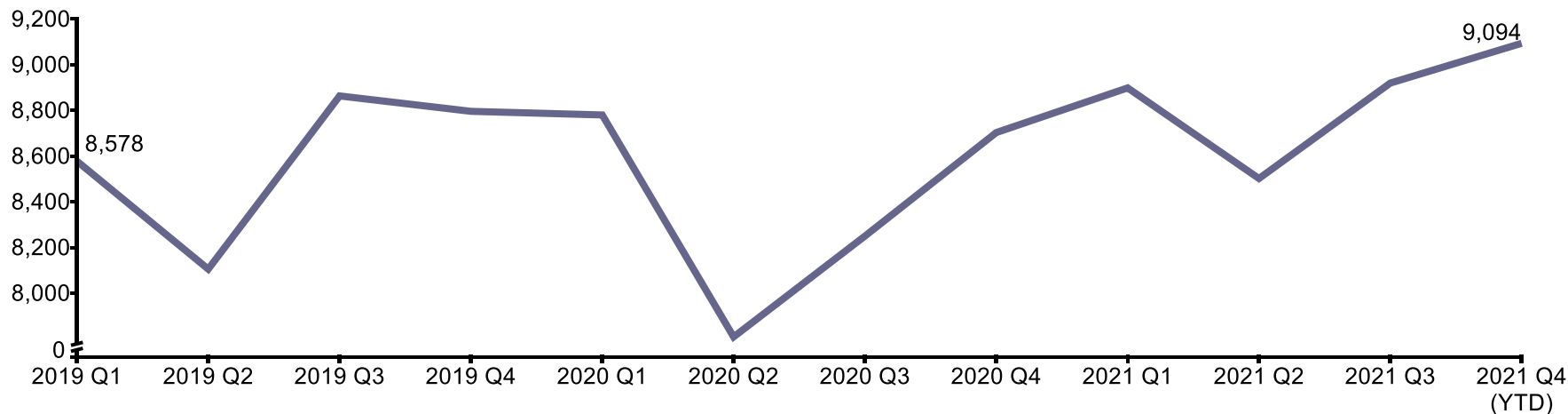
## Number of cases in backlog



## Monthly % of backlog cases disposed\*



## Number of jailed defendants



## Key Takeaways

1. Backlog and case processing remained flat in **Felony Courts** despite the fact that juries were out for a week at the end of November. In fact the backlog **declined to 18,901 from the peak of 19,351 in August**. Misdemeanor courts hit their highest backlog number at 24,319. They also saw a ~1.5% decline backlog cases processed.
2. Clearance rates **jumped up by 8% for Felony courts** to 112% and declined 3% for Misdemeanor courts to 119%.
3. Jail population had been trending upwards for the past several months but is currently at 8,750. **It is down by nearly 400 defendants in custody from 2 weeks ago.**

\*Some changes to methodology impacted numbers from the last report. Please see note for final calculations Note: Number of cases in backlog calculated as cases older than 360 days for felonies and 180 days for Misdemeanor; Number of backlog cases disposed is cases disposed that are over 360 days for felonies and 180 days for misdemeanor; Calculation for backlog = backlog cases/(backlog +disposed cases) Number of jailed defendants for Q4 2021 is an average through 11/09/2021. Cases disposed and in backlog are end of month snapshots Source: OCM, DCA, HCSO

# Data model suggests two factors will drive length of time to clear Felony backlog

1

**Clearance Rates:** This is the number of cases disposed in a month / the number of cases the Court receives in the month

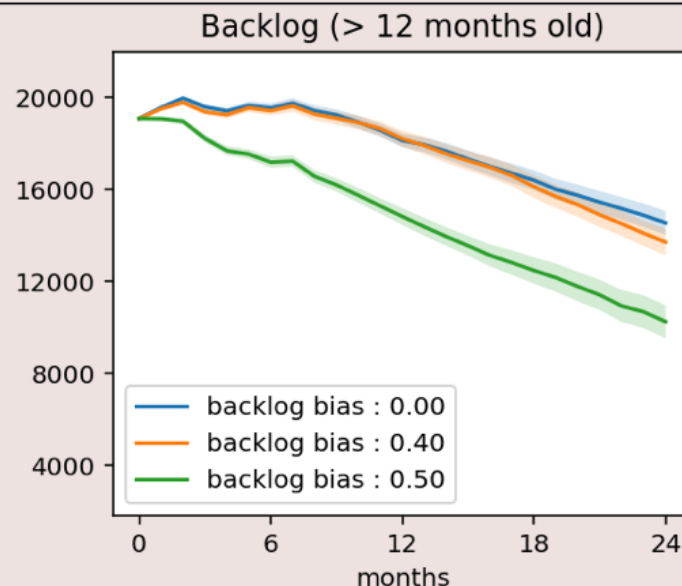
**Current rate – 112%**

2

**Backlog Bias:** This is the % of cases disposed in a month that have been in the system longer than 12 months

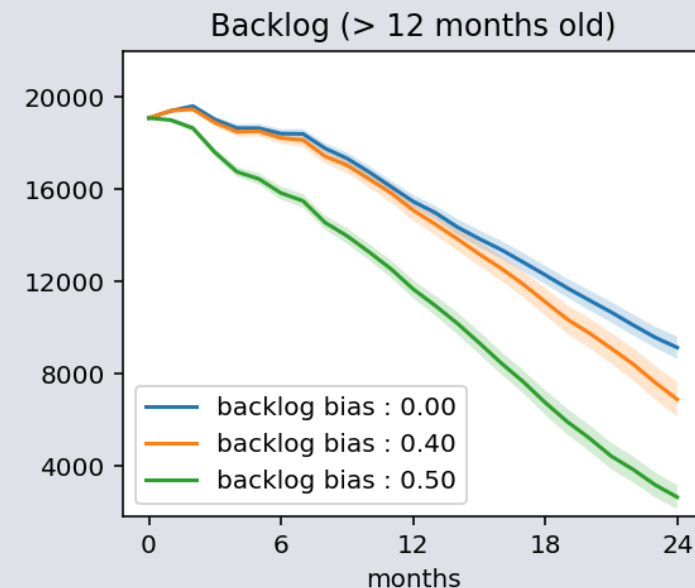
**Current Bias – 0%\***

## Current Case



Assuming a **110% clearance rate** (our clearance was 112% in November) and **0% backlog bias**, that is, an indifferent focus on backlog cases, will mean that **2 years from now, the backlog will be 14,559**. That is, we would have cleared **22% of the backlogged cases at the end of 24 months**

## Best case scenario



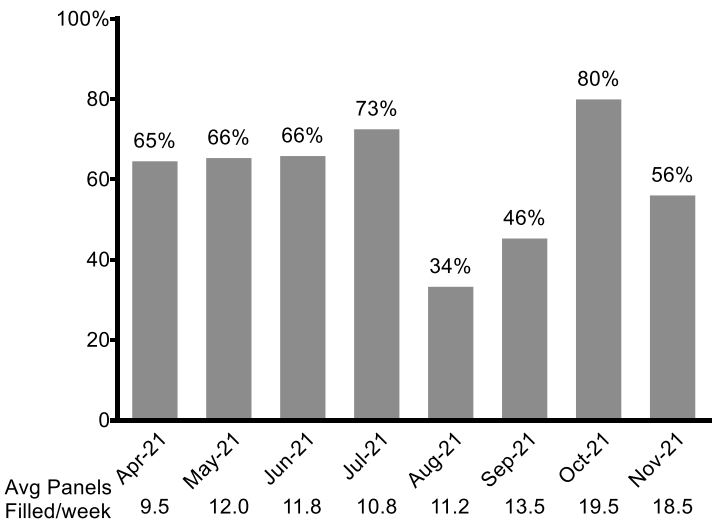
Assuming a **120% clearance rate**, and that **50% of cases disposed every month are Backlogged cases**, at the end of 24 months, we would **~2000 backlogged cases**. That is, we would have cleared **90% of the backlogged cases at the end of 24 months**

A focus on both **prioritizing backlog cases** in case disposition **along with clearance rates** will make a significant impact on the Felony backlog in 2 years

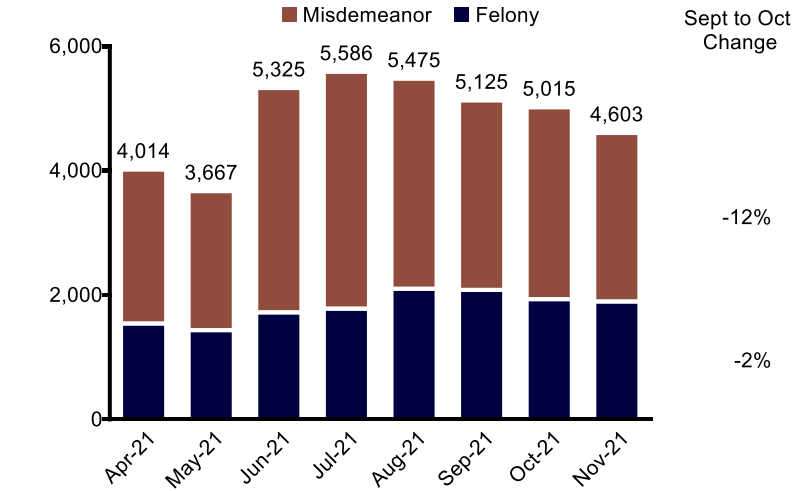
# Jury operations underway and new district Court making headway

## Jury Operations

Utilization Rate (%)



Number of Backlog Cases disposed



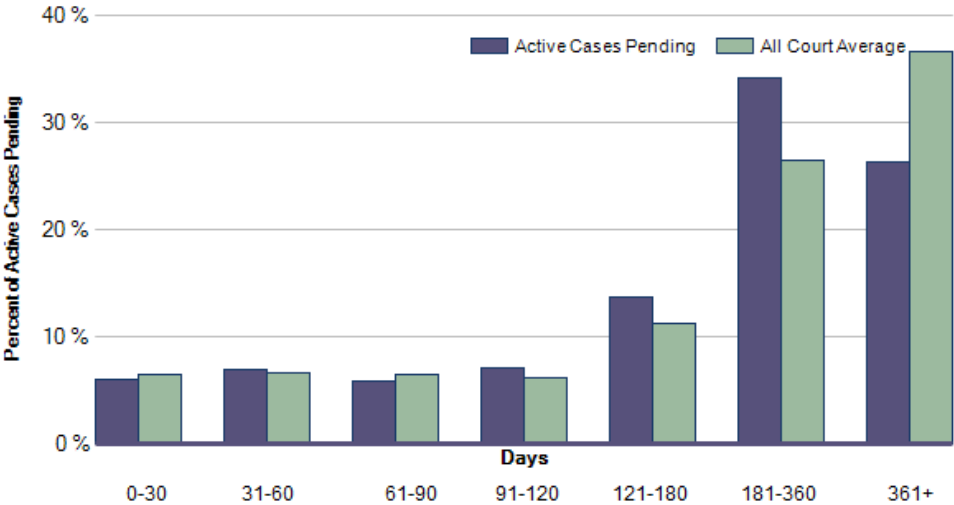
### Key Takeaways

1. Utilization rates down again from last month – this doesn't include the week of Thanksgiving when there was no jury selection
2. The number of panels used every week still at a respectable 18.5
3. Jury selection will be shut down for the last two weeks of December

## 482<sup>nd</sup> District Court

### Age Of Caseload For Court 482

Criminal District Courts for the Month of November 2021



1. 482<sup>nd</sup> court has been working efficiently with clearance rate of 156% for last 3 months
2. The Court is working through the oldest backlogged cases with a significantly lower backlog for cases older than 361 days (~26%) when compared to the all court average (~37%), but start

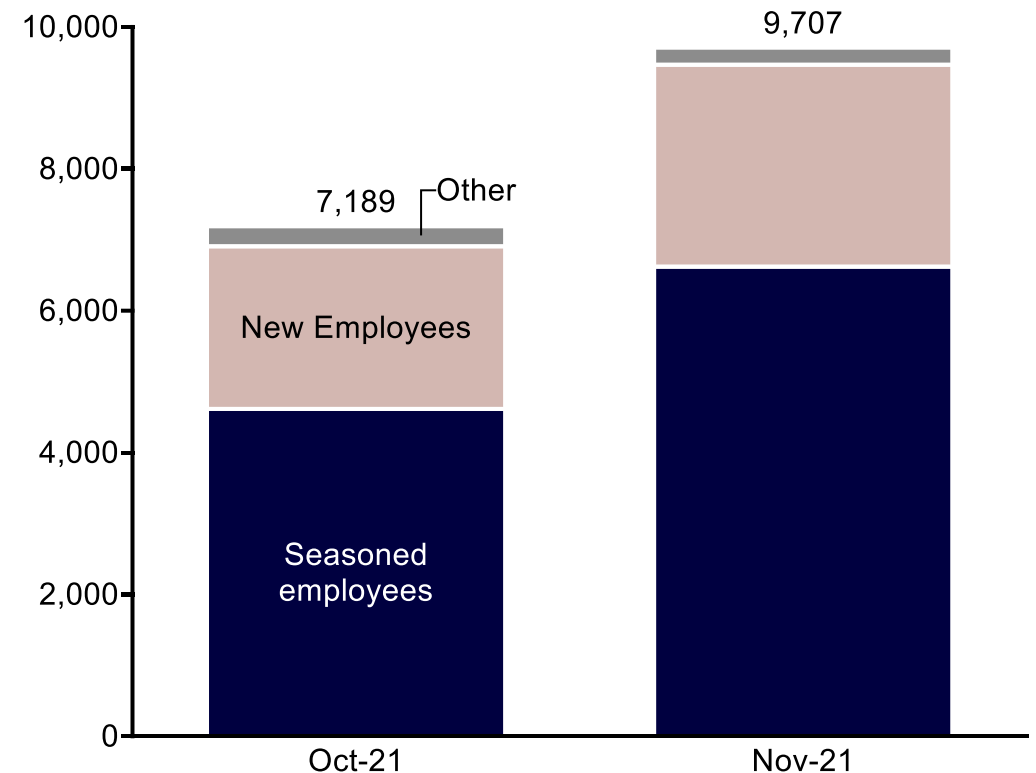


# HCSO temps scaling operations; changed process simplifying video prioritization

## Change in process

- DAO created a fulfillment website for HCSO and deployed it for the legacy Panasonic camera footage backlog. The website allows the HCSO to see the prioritization of cases as set by the DAO. These are ranked by the next setting date for the case, followed by the court setting type for that case. Jury Trials are ranked higher than other type of settings. These are further divided by types of cases.
- Daily morning data is provided back to the HCSO so they can track progress on the HCSO evidence backlog.
- Initially these were queued as requests by individual prosecutors, but now, when a charge is filed by HCSO, it is automatically added to the queue following the ranking criteria set.
- This has already reduced the **pending charges/requests from 13,120 to 11,730** with some of the coding changes and quicker processing

Number of videos produced



# of cases worked

1,667

2,163

# Other projects

1

## Emergency Dockets

Felony dockets kicked off mid-September:

- **62 cases were set for trial on the ERD trial dockets funded through ARPA** during September through November
- Of those **62 cases, 35 were disposed** by either the court or by jury trial during this time period. The remaining 27 have been carried on docket to a future date.
- An additional **661 cases** that were not set for trial were also disposed by the Emergency relief dockets, for a total of 696 cases disposed during the time period.

Misdemeanor Courts Emergency response dockets kicked off operations on November 8, 2021

2

## Public Defender

All 7 positions for the Public Defenders Office have been filled with 4 of the lawyers already on-boarded

5

## Associate Judges – awaiting kick-off

6 Associate Judges and associated staff have been approved for the District Courts. These are funded effective January 5, 2022 and are slated to start beginning of February to allow Justice entities sufficient time hire and train

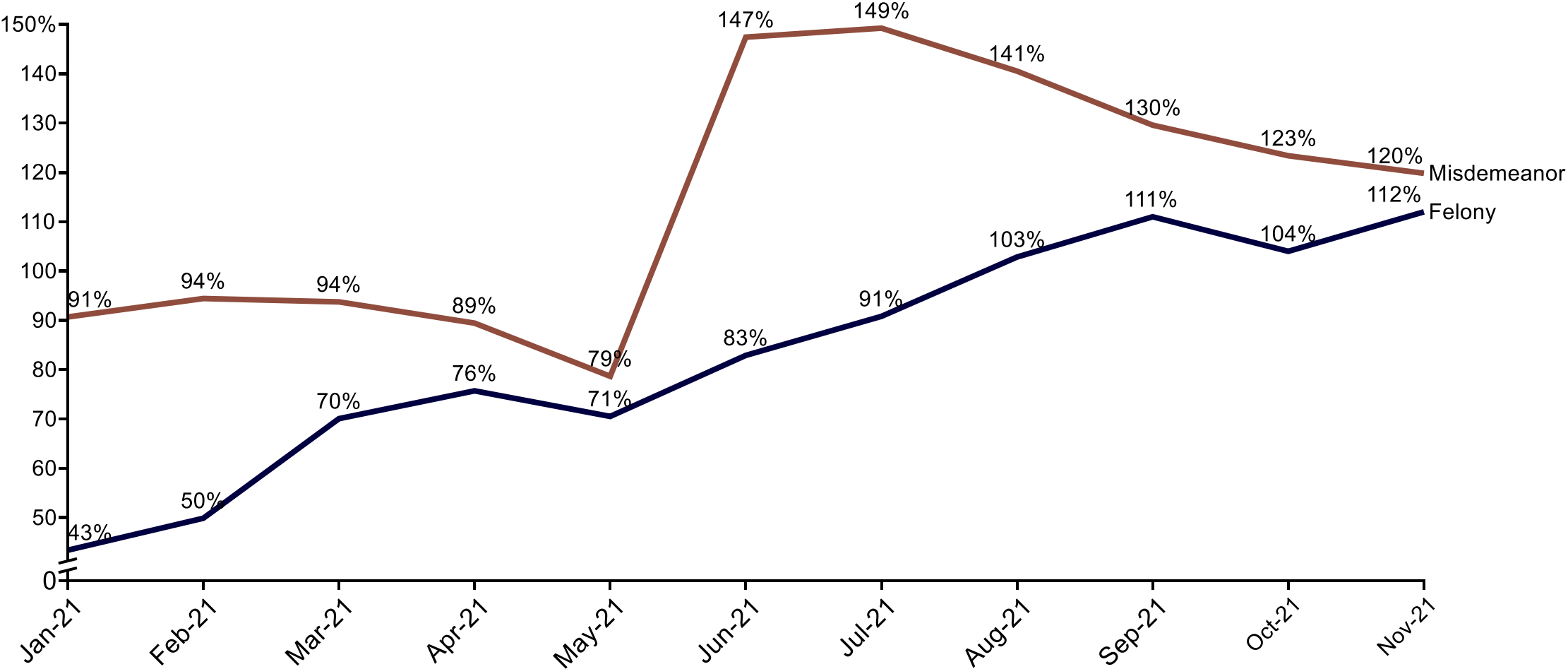
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## DA Evidence

- **Staff:** 7 DA evidence temp positions have been filled with another 24 still open
- **Technology:**
  - DAO has **9 law enforcement agencies live** with Evidence management systems with another **6 on deck to onboard in the next 2 weeks.**
  - DAO has had multiple meetings with Motorola (body worn camera provider) to develop an API like they have done with cloud evidence storage systems - Utility and Evidence.com. This development will affect HPD, DPS, Friendswood PD, Webster PD, possibly Tomball.
  - Internal DA system with Utility, Evidence.com and Panasonic interfaces has been deployed to DAO Quality Assurance users at this time. We will phase into full production soon for all DAO internal users.
  - Defense Attorney portal with Utility, Evidence.com, and Panasonic systems is not available as of yet, however, the DAO software is designed to allow defense attorneys to download evidence from these platforms as a stopgap measure. DAO is working with these companies on strategies to allow defense attorneys accounts to view evidence from within the DAO defense attorney portal and body worn camera vendors' website as well.



# Clearance Rates



# Harris County is making investments in every segment of the Justice pipeline

## System Intake

## Case Preparation

## Case Disposition

### What is this?

*The first step in the process to arrest and process the defendant, including having charges reviewed and accepted by the DA, having the Probable Cause Courts and the “home” misdemeanor / felony Courts set bail and bond conditions*

*Collection of evidence including 911 calls, law enforcement camera footage, physical and other digital evidence to provide the basis for case defense and prosecution*

*Final disposition of the case, either through a trial or any other dispositions – acquittal, dismissal, diversion, conviction, pleas or others*

### What were the issues?

Delays at the Probable Cause Courts in processing individuals through the Joint Processing Center. And low-level offenses taking time to disposition and adding to the pipeline of backlog cases

Delays in getting access to evidence, including 911 calls, law enforcement cameras due to limited technological infrastructure and processes, as well as processing staff

Constrained trial capacity due to limitations in number of juries we can call safely in a pandemic as well as Court capacity. The number of cases pending greatly outpaces the amount that can be processed by Courts in a year

### What has been done to address this?

1. Discussions are ongoing to understand how and what types of resources to add to Probable Cause Courts in order to move these cases quicker
2. DA's Triage project is aimed at reviewing the one-time, low-level offenses and bringing them to disposition faster, thereby focusing on the backlog

1. Temporary evidence processing staff provided to the HCSO and constables to reduce backlog of body worn and dash camera footage
2. Additional temp staff and programming staff to the DA to reduce backlog of evidence to be processed and creation of an evidence management tool to streamline processes in the long-run
3. 6 Associate judges for district courts to help ready cases for disposition

1. An additional permanent District Court to meet the growing needs of the County, with discussions ongoing on additional courts needed
2. Continued funding NRG space for Jury operations and expanded the number of juries from 4 to 7
3. 3 Emergency Response dockets for District Courts and 2 Emergency Response Dockets for County Criminal Courts at Law